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ABSTRACT

A study examined how one sixth-grade teacher's theoretical beliefs about literacy and biliteracy were reflected in her instructional practices. The subject taught in an English-Spanish bilingual classroom in a public school located in a neighborhood of low- to middle-class families in a large, southwestern city. Data included field notes comprising two and a half months of participant observation of reading and writing activities, interviews, and examination of instructional materials and students' written work. Results indicated that: (1) the teacher described herself as a whole language teacher; (2) the teacher made references to the importance of joint decision-making in a whole language classroom and viewed herself as offering choices; (3) however, the choices were limited by her clearly specified guidelines; (4) the teacher believed in the importance of helping her students to become more responsible, but for her, responsibility had more to do with procedure than with content; (5) the teacher's belief that the four stages of second language development (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are sequential contradicts descriptions of the "intertwined" processes of second language development among her students; and (6) the teacher does not plan to continue taking courses that would provide opportunities for her to reexamine her beliefs and practices. Findings suggest that, while the teacher has a clear understanding and well-grounded practice of whole language, her underlying beliefs and practices actually do not reflect a holistic view of children. language, and learning. (Contains 25 references.) (RS)

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TEACHERS' THEORETICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF LITERACY AND BILITERACY IN A BILINGUAL CLASSROOM

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TEACHERS' THEORETICAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY OF LITERACY AND BILITERACY IN A BILINGUAL CLASSROOM

by Elizabeth Noll

How are teachers' theoretical beliefs about literacy and biliteracy reflected in their instructional practices? The findings of this study of a sixth grade teacher in a bilingual classroom reveal the ways in which her understanding of whole language influences her teaching. This article describes the relationship between the teacher's beliefs and practice and examines both in light of current research on literacy, biliteracy, and teachers' belief systems.

The public school in which this study was conducted is located in a neighborhood of low- to middle-class families in a large, southwestern city. The school serves approximately 650 children in grades Kindergarten through six. There are two to three classes in each grade, of which one is designated English-Spanish bilingual. Following school district policy, instruction in these bilingual classrooms focuses primarily on development of English while maintaining and providing enrichment in Spanish. The ethnic and racial background of the student population at this school is: 78% Hispanic, 19% Anglo, 3% Afro-American, and .5% Asian.

The school building is very plain from the outside. Inside, however, it is bright and cheerful due to student artwork and projects which line the hallways and hang from the ceilings. There is evidence of both English and Spanish in these pieces of work though English is more heavily represented. Themes such as pride in the school, cooperation, and responsibility are commonly portrayed.

Methodology of the study

I had talked with the principal, Mr. Granillo, on several occasions prior to my request to conduct this study at his school. Therefore, when I approached him in regards to this research, he was readily agreeable to my observing and interviewing Ms. Hayes, the sixth grade bilingual teacher, contingent upon her permission. Throughout the study, Mr. Granillo remained interested and supportive and, despite a busy schedule, he readily consented to an interview.

Ms. Hayes, a young Anglo woman, agreed without hesitation to my request to gather data in her classroom, and throughout the time I spent in her classroom she was welcoming and helpful. She shared her lesson plans and samples of students' work, granted interviews that cut into her personal time, and completed a questionnaire. In my role as participant-observer, I spent time in the classroom two to three days each week for approximately two and a half months. Most of my observation sessions lasted between two and three hours which I found to be a workable amount of time. My shorter visits tended to leave me with an incomplete, sometimes fragmented sense of the activities I observed. With longer stays I felt rather overwhelmed by the quantity of data collected, and I noticed that my attention to detail diminished near the end of each session.

I generally planned my visits to coincide with activities involving reading or writing though I also observed at other times and in this way developed a good sense of a day in the life of this

class. Ms. Hayes gave me free reign of the classroom and thus, I could walk around or sit where I pleased, talk to students, look at lesson plans, and borrow resources. Usually I was able to write fieldnotes uninterrupted but frequently chose to put aside my notebook for periods to time to focus my attention more fully on the events in the classroom. There were occasions when Ms. Hayes asked me to help out as when I organized the playing of a Spanish word game with a small group of students. Events such as this one offered opportunities to interact with the students in a variety of ways.

In addition to taking fieldnotes during and after each of my observations in Ms. Hayes' classroom, I interviewed her once formally for approximately one hour in her classroom and engaged in a number of spontaneous conversations about her beliefs and practices. While helpful, the formal interview occurred rather early in my study and, had I waited, I expect my questions would have been different, thus eliciting more fruitful data. By contrast, my spontaneous conversations which took place throughout the study often produced valuable snapshots of Ms. Hayes' beliefs about teaching and learning. For example, Ms. Hayes related her view of Daily Oral Language, described later in this paper, when I accompanied her and her students to recess one day. This impromptu conversation about exercises in language mechanics revealed information that supported and extended my understanding of observations made in other contexts.

I followed up my formal interview with a short questionnaire to verify and gain more information on topics we had discussed. On this questionnaire Ms. Hayes elaborated upon her theoretical beliefs which helped to illuminate the areas and nature of differences between her theory and practice. This questionnaire and my interview with Mr. Granillo and, even more, my conversations with many of the sixth grade students provided me with very useful data for triangulation. It was through the "process of systematic sifting and comparison" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 180) that I eventually began to understand the significance of my various data. The focus of my study was continuously reshaped and directed by these data and by my ongoing analysis of the data, a process of "progressive focusing" (Hammersley & Atkinson, p. 175). Finally, the artifacts I collected of the students' written work in English and Spanish enriched my picture of the literacy and biliteracy experiences taking place in this sixth grade classroom.

Theory, Practice, and Paradigms

Ms. Hayes describes herself as a whole language teacher: "I believe in a whole language approach to teaching which integrates all subject areas in acquiring knowledge." Indeed, judging from the kinds of activities that take place in her classroom, Ms. Hayes' description of herself would appear to be accurate. The children in this sixth grade bilingual classroom are apparently involved in a variety of language experiences. Their studies of

Hawaii, the criminal court system, and Mexican Independence Day engage them in reading, writing, speaking, and listening as well as drawing, cooking, and dancing. They write in journals and read from tradebooks rather than from a basal series. The walls of the classroom give evidence of literacy in both English and Spanish with schedules, signs, the Pledge of Allegiance, assignments, and students' narrative and expository writing displayed on chalkboards and bulletin boards.

Thus, my initial impressions of Ms. Hayes' classroom and my early conversations with her suggested that she has a clear understanding and well-grounded practice of whole language. Yet, I discovered over time that her underlying beliefs and practice actually do not reflect a holistic view of children, language, and learning. I found instead a classroom in which literacy activities are carefully orchestrated by the teacher and in which the students have few opportunities to make authentic choices about the nature or direction of their learning. In effect, while many of the activities appeared on the surface to be ones commonly associated with whole language practice, they were actually representative of more traditional instructional practices.

In whole language classrooms teachers recognize the importance of not only allowing but encouraging their students to make choices about their learning. "Kids need to feel that what they are doing through language they have chosen to do because it is useful, or interesting, or fun for them. They need to own the processes they

use: to feel that the activities are their own" (Goodman, 1986, p. 31). When students make choices about their learning, the balance of power and control in the classroom shifts. As the students assume greater ownership of their learning, the teacher is no longer solely in charge of all decisions.

Stephen Nofziger (Freeman & Nofziger, 1991), also a bilingual classroom teacher, notes that relinquishing control can be a rather difficult, even frightening experience for teachers who have become comfortable with and adept at determining the kinds of learning opportunities that occur in their classrooms. Ms. Hayes is such a teacher. She is well organized and creative and combines these two qualities to achieve what appears to be highly effective teaching. And yet her strength in organizing becomes a liability when it excludes her students from genuinely influencing the focus and direction of their learning. As Alex, one of her sixth graders, comments, "We never get to choose what we do. She always decides and it's stuff she's interested in. She never asks us."

This comment would undoubtedly come as a surprise to Ms. Hayes. She makes references to the importance of joint decision-making in a whole language classroom and views herself as offering her students choices. These choices, however, tend to be so limited by her clearly specified guidelines that they lack any sense of authenticity or personal meaning to her students. The following activity, which Ms. Hayes described as an example of "providing choice as well as integration of subjects," illustrates

the point.

Ms. Hayes introduced this activity by explaining to the students that they would be combining spelling, language arts, and art. Selecting the Spanish translation of "Thanksgiving Day" (el dia de dar gracias) from that week's spelling list, she presented a lesson on how to conjugate the Spanish verb "dar" and its English counterpart "to give." She then instructed those who speak Spanish as a second language to write several sentences beginning with "Yo doy gracias por..." and those who speak English as a second language to do the same in English ("I give thanks for..."). Both groups could then *choose* how to complete the sentences. The sentences were to be written on a white sheet of paper with a mimeographed cornucopia in the corner. The children filled in the cornucopia with different colored pencils then glued the white paper onto a larger orange piece of paper. Ms. Hayes displayed the finished products on a bulletin board.

This example reveals more than Ms. Hayes's understanding of the concepts of choice and integration. It tells us something about the authenticity of writing experiences in her classroom, which is also basic to whole language. Edelsky and Smith (1984) discuss the inauthenticity of writing that serves the teacher's, rather than the student's, purpose. Such writing is often used for evaluation and compliance. The purpose of the assignment mentioned above was to provide the students with practice of a grammar sub-skill in their second language which the teacher could then

evaluate and grade. The writing activity did not originate with the students, and it is unlikely that it had much meaning to them as they engaged in it or was of substantive value to them after its completion.

The importance of creating meaning in second language acquisition is stressed by Hudelson (1984) and Krashen (1981). Krashen's conviction that language is acquired "by understanding messages and not focusing on the form of the input or analyzing it" (p. 58) is in keeping with a whole language view of learning. He rejects the notion that language should be learned through sequenced instruction of its structure (such as Ms. Hayes' teaching of verb conjugation), and he cautions against trying to engage students in any meaningful topic when the purpose of the activity is practice of a language structure.

Ms. Hayes' interpretation of integration as evidenced in the Thanksgiving writing activity described above appears to be characteristic of her practice. For instance, in the following conversation, Ms. Hayes describes her view of integration in Daily Oral Language, a structured, noncontextualized method of grammar and language mechanics instruction.

> EN: In terms of your belief in whole language and in integrating subject matter, do you have a problem with D.O.L. [Daily Oral Language]?
>
> Ms. Hayes: D.O.L.? D.O.L. is very much integrated into the other subjects.

EN: In what way?

Ms. Hayes: It's integrated into what we are studying and what we talk about. For example, I may put up [on the chalkboard] a sentence with capitalization errors such as, "We will celebrate 16 de septiembre, or Mexican Independence Day" for the students to correct. I always use sentences that fit in with what we're doing so in this way D.O.L. agrees with whole language philosophy.

Ms. Hayes' interpretation of integration of spelling is similar: the twenty English and Spanish words she chooses for the weekly spelling list generally come from other subject areas. Her lesson plans show that the spelling words are reviewed each day through discussion and activities, yet none of these is tied in with other subject matter. In one spelling lesson, the children were to compose sentences in English and Spanish, using the words from that week's list. Ms. Hayes instructed the students to include in their sentences the conjugated forms of the verb "ir" or "to go" which she demonstrated on the chalkboard just before assigning the activity. Because of the constraint imposed by being required to use the same verb in every sentence, many of the sentences were contrived and even nonsensical.

Informal conversations with several of Ms. Hayes' students suggest that the spelling words are introduced on Monday and, other than the sentence construction described and repetitive drill, they are not a part of the students' writing. Each Friday a weekly

spelling test is given and on Monday of the following week, a new spelling list is given to the students. Following is a short conversation with Linda, a student, which was similar in content to comments from several other students.

EN: What do you do for spelling?

Linda: Ms. Hayes gives us the words then we have a pre-test on Monday and we have to write the words we miss five times. Then we study them for the test she gives us on Friday.

EN: Do you use the words in your own writing during the week or play games or have activities to help you learn the words?

Linda: Uh-uh, no. Never.

As these examples indicate, Ms. Hayes views any overlap of subjects as evidence of integration rather than recognizing a more holistic definition of the term in which integration "means that major concepts and larger understandings are being developed in social contexts and that related activities are in harmony with and important to the major concepts" (Routman, 1991, p. 276).

Based on my conversations with Ms. Hayes and my observations of her practice, it became apparent that her understanding of whole language is strongly influenced by more traditional beliefs. Pace's (1991) description of a teacher she observed might apply to Ms. Hayes as well: She "doesn't yet have a thorough understanding of the theory behind the label [of whole language]. When a teacher

undertakes activities in the absence of a coherent theory of language and learning, inconsistencies and contradictions in children's literacy experiences often appear" (p. 13). Ms. Hayes' practice and theory of language and learning may be a reflection of her efforts to make sense of whole language within a far different paradigm. She adapts, or "domesticates" (Olson, 1981), certain fundamental concepts of whole language to support her existing views and practices.

Responsible Learners: Responsible to Whom?

Helping children to become responsible learners is a goal in whole language classrooms. To achieve this goal, teachers encourage children to take risks and assume ownership of their own learning. The power to make choices is essential. Children must be allowed opportunities to make choices of real consequence if they are to feel that they "own" and, hence, have responsibility for their learning. As Cambourne (1988) explains, "learners are...required to take **responsibility** for deciding about what to learn, what to engage with, in what order to approach any given set of tasks and how to go about any particular task" (pp.84-85). Ms. Hayes believes in the importance of helping her students to become more responsible but for her, responsibility has more to do with procedure than with content. She maintains that her students will become responsible by adhering to certain standards which she determines. For instance, for homework assignments to be accepted,

the students must have their name, the date, the subject, and the assignment written in the upper righthand corner of their paper. In addition, the homework must be kept inside a specially designated homework folder and handed in as soon as the students enter the room in the morning. If any of these procedures is not followed precisely or if the assignment is not finished, a permanent zero is recorded for the grade. Missing work must be made up even though doing so will not erase the zero. Ms. Hayes explains that these rules will "force the students to become responsible learners."

The narrative below tells of an incident involving a student and his homework which occurred one morning. This excerpt from my expanded fieldnotes includes a record of the events which took place before and after the incident as well as a physical description of the room to give a more complete sense of this setting.

9:00 AM The bell rings and few moments later Ms. Hayes opens the door to her classroom and steps partially into the hallway where I stand with her students, many of whom are in line along the wall. She looks at them expectantly, puts a finger to her lips, and says, "I'm waiting." Several of the students who have been talking become quiet. Ms. Hayes smiles, then looks directly at Lana, the first student in line, and says, "Good morning." Lana says, "Good morning," in return, looks Ms. Hayes in the eye, and they shake hands. Lana moves on into the classroom, and the same

procedure is repeated with each student. The students seem to be very familiar with what is expected of them and many walk up to Ms. Hayes with their right hand extended and their eyes on Ms. Hayes' face.

In three instances Ms. Hayes makes comments to students as when she speaks to Karina: "Welcome back. How are you feeling?" At these times, the next child in line usually slips by with a quick handshake and a mumbled, "Good morning." Hector, a new student, looks downward as he shakes Ms. Hayes' hand. She catches him by the arm as he moves on and tells him in Spanish, "Remember, you must look at me in the eye and say, "Good morning." Hector nods his head and goes on.

In these exchanges there is an odd combination of rather rigidly defined expectations of behavior on the one hand and seemingly sincere interest in each child on the other. With few exceptions, Ms. Hayes' manner is pleasant, but she insists on a firm handshake, a verbal greeting, and eye contact. With two students, Ms. Hayes inquires about homework being completed. When one of the students, Mary, answers affirmatively, Ms. Hayes asks in a stern tone: "Are you sure?" The other student admits that he did not finish his work and Ms. Hayes is clearly displeased. She asks, "Why not? Do you have a reason?" The boy whispers an answer and Ms. Hayes responds, "That is not a reason. I expect you to complete your homework."

As the students enter the classroom most remove their homework

folders from their backpacks and place them on a semi-circular table located about 15 feet from the doorway. Two students, Tony and Lana, pick up a manila folder and a stamp pad from Ms. Hayes' desk and sit down at the table. Along this end of the room is a long bulletin board on which the students' work is displayed. Ms. Hayes' desk is also here, immediately to the left of the doorway. The students' desks occupy most of the space in the center of the classroom. There are six rows with five desks in each row, and seat assignments are determined by Ms. Hayes. All of the desks face a large chalkboard in the front of the room. Behind the desks is a wall of windows underneath which are built-in bookshelves where Ms. Hayes stores extra textbooks, reference books, and other teaching materials. Students' work is sometimes displayed on the windows (e.g., leaves, stained glass windows made of tissue paper, etc.) or hung on the wall above the windows (e.g., colored maps of the world).

Along the fourth wall of the room (to the students' left as they are sitting) is another chalkboard on which Ms. Hayes alternates writing the daily schedule in English and Spanish. There also are bulletin boards, a hanging world map in English, and a low, free-standing bookshelf next to which is a small rug. The bookshelf holds tradebooks, mostly in English, for the students' use. Nearby, on a corner bulletin board, Ms. Hayes posts perfect spelling tests each week. In the corner sits a computer on a small table.

After the students hand in their homework folders, they go to their desks and chat with one another in both English and Spanish. About half of the students sit down right away and a few of them take materials from their desks. The rest of the students stand or walk around to see other students. The noise level is moderate.

Since they entered the classroom, Tony and Lana have been sitting at the table where the students hand in their homework folders. Tony has the teacher's ink pad and stamp and Lana has a checklist of the students' names. As Tony stamps the students' homework papers, he reads aloud the names for Lana who checks them off on her list. It is through this procedure that Ms. Hayes keeps track of homework received.

At 9:04 AM Jose brings his homework folder to the table and Tony tells him, "It's late. You get a zero." Jose says, "Aw-w..." and raps his folder on the table in frustration. He returns to his desk with his folder but, instead of sitting down, walks up to Ms. Hayes who has just now finished shaking hands and is standing in front of the room. He speaks to her, gesturing to his folder, and though I cannot hear him, I hear Ms. Hayes' response: "You know the rules." Jose returns to his desk, clearly upset. He slams his folder on his desk top, slumps into his seat, and puts his head down.

For the next several minutes, Ms. Hayes takes care of attendance and other "housekeeping" chores while the students talk among themselves quietly and write in their journals in response to

an assignment she has written on the chalkboard. Jose neither talks nor writes but, at 9:12 AM when Ms. Hayes tells the class to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance, he stands and recites it with the rest of the students. After all of the students are reseated, Ms. Hayes briefly describes the day's schedule then says in a soft voice, "Okay, let's have our moment of silence. Put your heads down and close your eyes and think about what you will be doing today. Concentrate on doing your best." The students put their heads on their desks though a few, including Jose, do not close their eyes. After a moment, Jose raises his head part way and looks around at the other students then stares off into space. So begins his day at school.

Ms. Hayes is unaware of the discouraging effects her homework policy has on Jose and on other students in the class. She believes that meeting her expectations will help these students become responsible and that any zeroes received will motivate them to try harder. In addition, she contends that her rules prepare students for the demands of junior high school and the responsibilities they will have later on in life. Unfortunately, her practice, far from encouraging responsible learners, tends to discourage at least some of her students and it devalues their work. Besides not being "required to take **responsibility** for deciding about what to learn" (Cambourne, 1988, p. 84), they have little control over what becomes of their work once it is completed. At best, these students are learning to respond

appropriately to external expectations set by their teacher--a far cry from developing the kind of responsibility Cambourne describes.

Richardson and Anders (1990) suggest that research-based practices that teachers adopt become embedded within the teachers' own frameworks which may not match the framework in which the practice originated. This notion not only addresses Ms. Hayes' interpretation of encouraging responsible learners, but her use of student journals as well. Ms. Hayes cites classroom journals as an example of her whole language practice. However, she uses journals more as a classroom management tool than as a means for students to explore new ideas, communicate with her or with other students, or to respond to literature.

Each morning Ms. Hayes writes a topic on the chalkboard in both English and Spanish which the students are to write about immediately upon sitting down. While they write, Ms. Hayes takes roll and performs other managerial duties. At the end of ten minutes the class stops writing and sometimes they discuss their responses to the assigned topic. The topics tend to be close-ended and rarely is there continuity from one entry to the next. One journal topic was: "What is your most/least favorite Thanksgiving food? Why?" and written underneath it, a close translation: "Que es tu comida favorita del dia de dar gracias? Por que?" For many of the Hispanic students this topic lacked any meaning as their families do not celebrate Thanksgiving.

Richardson and Anders' (1990) description of the way in which

a teacher's framework may be different from the original theoretical framework of an instructional activity applies to Ms. Hayes' use of journals:

> [The teacher's framework] may...be related to classroom management and control...and to the notions of the roles of teachers and students. Thus, the research-based activity and the implemented activity may be called the same thing, and even look somewhat similar, but, in fact, are not the same practices because the activities are embedded in different belief sets, intentions and theoretical frameworks (p. 116).

Second Language Development

Ms. Hayes' theoretical beliefs and practices described thus far apply to literacy in both English and Spanish. It is equally interesting to look at her stance specifically in regards to theories and research of second language learning. Ms. Hayes disagrees with the view that a child's ability to read and write in one language may interfere with learning to read and write in a second language. She states: "The language acquisition process is virtually the same in any language. Therefore, the skills which a learner acquires may be transferred to his or her second language. A child's abilities in their first language would be beneficial to second language acquisition." She supports this statement by

describing her own frequent use of both languages to clarify information to her students, especially in showing similarities and differences in the structure and spelling of the two languages. She also refers to her acceptance of codeswitching in verbal and written form though notes that the latter is fairly uncommon.

Edelsky's (1986) research supports Ms. Hayes' observation that codeswitching in written work is a rare occurrence. Edelsky also challenges the assumption, or "myth," of language interference as do Crowell (1991), Goodman, Goodman, and Flores (1979), and Krashen (1980). Krashen suggests that second language learners use the rules of their first language to support their emerging fluency, a view that is supported by the findings of Edelsky, Goodman et al., and Crowell in studies of bilingual children's reading development. Reyes (1992), too, provides evidence that language mixing, rather than hampering language development, in fact enabled the students in her study to achieve academically.

In discussing the stages of second language development during our interview, Ms. Hayes presents her belief that the four stages of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are sequential. To support her belief she describes Nancy, a student who is just beginning to learn English.

> Nancy can understand very well the English language when spoken to her. Next comes her speaking skills. Right now she is on a level where she does not have a whole lot of capability to read and

> comprehend in English. So that's what we are working on with her. Then we'll ease her into the writing. Actually, they are all intertwined--I mean, some of it occurs simultaneously--but, um--there are definitely four stages in language acquisition.

It is interesting to note that Ms. Hayes' observations that the processes are "all intertwined" and occurring "simultaneously" contradict her earlier description of Nancy and that she reverts to a view of sequential stages. This example, and her tendency to preface statements of belief with the words "research shows," raise the question of whether Ms. Hayes examines the research in light of her own observations in the classroom.

Hornberger (1989) challenges the longstanding assumption that language development follows the logical sequence referred to by Ms. Hayes. Hornberger and others (Edelsky, 1986; Goodman & Goodman, 1983; Gathercole, 1988; Hudelson, 1984) believe that receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) language development is a two-way street, that growth can and does occur in both directions.

Krashen's theory (1981), that through "comprehensible input" language structure is acquired by understanding messages received and that speech will follow, has been disputed by Gathercole who argues that production sometimes precedes comprehension. Pica, Holliday, Lewis, and Morgenthaler (1989) have extended the concept

of "comprehensible input" to an understanding of the importance of "comprehensible output" as well. This concept, later disputed by Krashen, recognizes that "speaking, as well as listening, contributes to the negotiation of meaning in interaction which, in turn, is said to lead to language acquisition" (Hornberger, p. 281). Edelsky's (1986) study in bilingual classrooms with children who lacked English oral proficiency but were able to write in English provides further support for this view of dual-directionality of language development.

Teacher Beliefs in Bilingual Education

Noticeably scarce in the literature on biliteracy is research on the role and importance of teachers' beliefs guiding instruction in the bilingual classroom. One exception is found in a study by Moll (1988) in which he examines the methodology and theoretical beliefs of two fifth grade teachers, one Spanish-English bilingual and the other English monolingual. Both of these teachers were highly effective in creating literate environments which challenged their students to interact with oral and written language in a variety of meaningful and purposeful ways. This study is unique in its focus on the recognition and description of teachers' theoretical beliefs. Moll provides evidence that these teachers "were sound theorists...[who] could elucidate both the 'hows' and 'whys' of teaching" (p. 468). Their view of children and learning and literacy, as well as their commitment to acting on those

beliefs, were the guiding forces behind their practice.

By contrast, it is interesting to look again at Edelsky's (1986) study mentioned above. In describing the bilingual program which she and other researchers helped to implement, Edelsky refers to their role "as 'outside experts' bent on trying to change teacher beliefs and practices" (p. 3). Later, she remarks on the program director's responsibility "to find ways to have her theoretical and philosophical views on language and curriculum implemented in the Program" (p. 3). Both statements seem to assume that theory is something that can be forced upon teachers or instilled in instructional programs. While Edelsky does mention that "actual classroom practices and teachers' beliefs regarding literacy, language distribution, writing, and curriculum matched official Program philosophy in varying degrees" (p. 36), there is no suggestion that the teachers' beliefs should be further investigated or should assume a more prominent and active role.

Finally, in her work on reading instruction for language minority students, Thonis (1981) describes methods of teaching reading but nowhere suggests that the decision regarding which method(s) to use should be theoretically based. Rather, she recommends that "any method wisely used by a careful, knowledgeable teacher can be applied *if* it is suitable for the background and unique needs of pupils" (see Thonis, 1970). While meeting individual students' needs is critical, this eclectic stance does not take the place of a theoretical basis for classroom practice.

More recent research focuses on eliciting and understanding teachers' theoretical beliefs and studying the ways in which they are reflected in practice. Richardson and Anders (1990) note that the relationship between belief and practice is not as clear as many people think. They suggest that "teachers' theories may not be particularly coherent, and contradictory beliefs may be held by the same teacher" (p. 7). In their study, classroom "activities [were] full of actions that did not appear coherent according to any one theoretical orientation" (p. 116). These observations are descriptive of Ms. Hayes as well. Although she has clearly articulated rationales for her instructional behaviors and although, on one level, her behaviors are consistent with those rationales, Ms. Hayes' practice is not reflective of the holistic nature of whole language.

Teacher Beliefs and Change

Ms. Hayes is a bright and energetic teacher who is committed to the teaching profession. While she strongly defends her beliefs, she also seems to be open to new ideas. Unfortunately, she does not plan to continue her education where she might have courses that would provide opportunities to reexamine her beliefs and practices in light of current research. Her decision is primarily due to the dissatisfaction she experienced in her undergraduate program. Much of her unhappiness stemmed from, as she stated, "having to jump through hoops." In particular, she

resented having to write papers on topics largely determined by her professors and about which she had little interest. It is ironic and sad that the nature of the writing experiences Ms. Hayes offers her students now are so similar to those she endured as an college student. As troubling is her apparent unawareness of this dichotomy.

The value of reflection by teachers on their beliefs and practices is recognized by Goodman (1988) and Richardson and Anders (1990) as well as other researchers. Goodman asserts that a focus on reflective inquiry in teacher education will encourage pre-service teachers to engage "in a continual process of interpretation of past and present events as they create meanings about those events" (p. 133). Such a process of internal dialogue, contends Goodman, results in pre-service teachers who feel that their practice reflects their theoretical beliefs. Ms. Hayes' comments indicate that reflective inquiry was not a part of her undergraduate teacher education program. Rather, she experienced a "functionalist orientation" which Goodman describes as treating students as "passive entities who merely adjust to outside forces" (p. 133).

Richardson and Anders (1990) maintain that opportunities for teachers to reflect on and talk about their theoretical frameworks and practices in relationship to research-based theories and activities are essential for proper implementation of practices to occur. They believe that such opportunities engender empowerment

of teachers which supports positive change in their teaching practices. Ms. Hayes has few occasions to engage in professional dialogues with her colleagues or with her principal who she perceives as having little, if any, influence on her practice. Furthermore, by her own admission, she rarely reads professional journals to gain new ideas and perspectives.

Opportunities for all teachers to consciously reflect upon their theoretical beliefs and practices in light of research-based theories as well those of their colleagues is important, but especially for teachers in bilingual classrooms. Moll (1988) and Reyes (1992) have shown that students with limited proficiency in English are typically relegated to a basic skills approach to learning rather than being engaged in relevant literacy activities. Bilingual teachers need to be aware of research, such as that conducted by Moll and Reyes, which reveals the positive experiences of students who are allowed to interact purposefully with language in meaningful contexts. These teachers--like Ms. Hayes--must reexamine their own knowledge and beliefs about learning and determine whether their current practices are truly reflective. It is through such reflection, based on knowledge of research-based theory and opportunities to share ideas with colleagues, that teachers' instructional practices will result in an informed understanding of their own theoretical beliefs.

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